

## THE LIFE HISTORY OF *NEPTIS PRASLINI STRAUDINGEREANA* DE NICEVILLE (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE: NYMPHALINAE)

By G. A. Wood

P.O. Box 122, Atherton, N. Qld, 4883

### Abstract

The life history of *Neptis praslini straudingereana* de Niceville is described and a food plant listed.

### Introduction

The black and white aeroplane, *Neptis praslini straudingereana*, is distributed from Cape York to Tully (Common and Waterhouse, 1981). While bushwalking at Iron Range I observed a female of this species to oviposit on the foliage of a climbing plant. Eggs were collected and the resultant larvae were raised on cuttings of the foodplant.

### Life history

**Foodplant.** *Phylacium bracteosum* Benn. Fabaceae.

**Egg.** 1 mm high. Green, deeply pitted, densely covered with short hairs, spherical (slightly higher than wide).

**First instar.** Length 4 mm. Head pale brown, round,, roughly textured. Body pale green, roughly textured, with a raised band of tubercles between segments.

**Third instar.** Length 10 mm. Head elongate, pitted, with short spines, short hairs, and with pointed vertical, dorso-lateral horns. White, with black central line which forks and outlines the frons. Also with branching black lines from horns to base of head. Body covered with small tubercles; meso- and metathorax with a pair of forward curving, outward directed, spiny dorso-lateral processes, those on metathorax longest. Abdomen with a pair of spiny, dorso-lateral processes, on segments two, eight and nine; processes on segments two and nine directed backwards, those on eight outwards. White with large, down-curving, green 'saddle' between metathoracic processes and processes on ninth abdominal segment; within green 'saddle' a small black area encompassing the processes on the second abdominal segment.

**Fifth instar** (Fig. 1). Length 23 mm. Head as in third instar but with spines more obvious, colour greenish-white. Body as in third instar but pale green, darkening toward the rear where a broken white basal line is located. Processes on mesothorax and abdominal segments eight and nine white with black spines, those of large green 'saddle' replaced with white which commences at the base of the fourth segment and curves up along the body to terminate with the processes on the ninth abdominal segment. Pairs of processes on meso- and metathorax joined by white and dark green transverse lines. Spiracles black, edged white.

**Pupa** (Fig. 2). Length 16 mm. Anterior end with two lateral projections, thorax with strong dorsal ridge; abdomen with dorsal ridge and dorso-lateral



Figs 1, 2. *Neptis praslini straudingereana*: (1) fifth instar larva on food plant; (2) pupa.

projections on second segment. Head and thorax silver-cream with black striae. Abdomen silver-cream with scant suffusions of black. Suspended by cremaster.

*Notes.* Eggs are laid singly beneath the leaves of the foodplant. Larvae shelter beneath the leaves and feed day or night. Pupation occurs on the foodplant.

A life cycle, completed in thirty six days, commenced in early December. The egg hatched in six days, the larval stage took twenty one days, and the pupal duration was nine days.

#### Reference

Common, I. F. B. and Waterhouse, D. F., 1981. *Butterflies of Australia*. Revised edition. Angus and Robertson, Sydney. 682 pp.